

American Sleep Apnea Association

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The Honorable Hoon-Yung Hopgood
State Senator for Michigan
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

November 28, 2011

Dear Senator Hopgood:

On behalf of the American Sleep Apnea Association and OSA patients who drive trucks for a living, thank you for introducing this legislation. Positive Airway Pressure therapy is most effective if it can be used all night, every night. Bill 819, if enacted, will make it possible truckers to use their therapy while traveling through the great state of Michigan. We cannot have someone representing the association on the 29th to testify in support of the legislation. We can send this letter in support to be included in the record.

Many truck drivers spend more nights sleeping in their truck than they do at home. Twelve days out two at home is the norm for the long haul over the road segment of the trucking industry. Any anti-idling regulation has the practical effect of turning off the heat, air conditioning, and power to the home of truck drivers.

Sleep apnea is a chronic condition where the soft tissues on the throat and tongue block the airway while sleeping. When the airway is blocked the body goes into a fight or flight mode rousing you from the deep restful stages of sleep. These arousals cause increased daytime sleepiness, aggravate diabetes, aggravate high blood pressure and a host of other medical complications. Sleep apnea is a disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAA). Sleep apnea is treated by using an electrically powered device to provide positive air pressure to the throat to prevent it from obstructing during sleep. Commonly called CPAP machines these can be medically required for anyone with sleep apnea. More specifically the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has set CPAP use compliance standards for any truck drivers with sleep apnea.

Over the past 5-7 years the problems of untreated sleep apnea among truck drivers has gotten more and more attention. Some studies suggest as high as 28% of truck drivers may have sleep apnea compared with about 10% in the general population. This has generated many programs to ensure truck drivers are screened, tested and treated for sleep apnea.

The problem then becomes "Where do you plug in a CPAP in a semi-truck?"

Many of the anti-idling alternatives work well for some weather conditions. A CPAP machine cannot be safely used in temperatures below 45 degrees or above 80 degrees. Unfortunately, other than an auxiliary power unit, few anti-idling alternatives exist for truck drivers that also need to power a CPAP machine while sleeping. Auxiliary Power Units (APU) can cost upwards of \$ 8,000 each and have maintenance issues. While funding programs exist to help fund APU and other idling alternatives these programs can and have not made this technology available to all trucks operating in or traveling through the great state of Michigan.

The section of the bill containing the following language to allow idling is a needed exemption to address this issue:

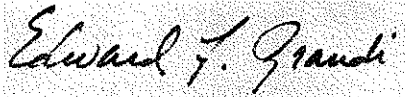
19 (H) TO POWER A MEDICAL DEVICE, SUCH AS A CONTINUOUS POSITIVE
20 AIRWAY PRESSURE MACHINE, BEING USED BY A PERSON PRESENT IN A
21 SLEEPING BIRTH DURING A SLEEP OR REST PERIOD, IF THE VEHICLE IS NOT
22 EQUIPPED WITH A FUNCTIONING AUXILIARY POWER UNIT.

This exemption will also help ensure that this bill is in compliance with the ADAA and make it possible for truckers with treated sleep apnea remain adherent to their therapy.

Thank you for reaching out to us and making us part of the process.

The association is available to you as a resource on matters concerning sleep and sleep apnea should the need arise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Edward J. Grandi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "E" and "G".

Edward Grandi
Executive Director